

**HARPALUS (PSEUDOPHONUS) GRISEUS PANZER
(COL.: CARABIDAE) AT WIMBLEDON, SURREY
– THE FIRST DEFINITELY BRITISH RECORD?**

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MY FRIEND Professor Dacie runs a light trap for lepidoptera in his garden at Wimbledon, Surrey and passes on to me any beetles caught. Among a number trapped during the second half of July 1995 was a carabid which ran down straightforwardly to *Harpalus griseus* in the key provided by Freude & Arnold (1976). I sent the specimen to Dr Martin Luff who replied very promptly that he agreed with my diagnosis.

Superficially, *H. griseus* resembles a small example of *H. rufipes* De Geer. The more important differences are given in Table 1. The Wimbledon specimen is a male with a length of 10.5mm. It has all the typical features of the species given in the table.

Though the name *H. griseus* appeared in early lists of British insects, e.g. that of Stephens (1829), the early supposition that it was British has not been sustained. Initially, Fowler (1886) accepted it as such, no doubt influenced by the announcement (Rye, 1863) that there were two examples, though lacking localities, in the Waterhouse Collection. Fowler also listed Cannock Chase, the New Forest and Ireland as sites from which *H. griseus* had been recorded.

While Rye was responsible for drawing attention to the Waterhouse specimens, he himself appears to have been uncertain about their British origin, later listing the species as doubtfully British (Rye, 1866). Later, Fowler too seems to have had doubts, for *H. griseus* is not in the list of British beetles published by Sharp & Fowler (1893) and, later still, he formally withdrew it on the stated grounds that he knew of no authentic British specimen (Fowler & Donisthorpe, 1913). Johnson (1894) mentions south Louth as an Irish site but this record too was later rejected (Johnson & Halbert, 1901). More recent authors dealing with British beetles (e.g. Beare, 1930; Joy, 1932; Kloet & Hincks, 1945; Pope, 1977) have simply omitted *H. griseus* without comment.

To try and find out why *H. griseus* was first accepted as a British beetle and then rejected, I have attempted to locate and examine the specimens to which Fowler (1886) and Johnson (1884) referred. One of the two Waterhouse specimens was found to be still present in the Waterhouse Collection in the Royal Scottish Museums, Edinburgh. I have been able to examine it and find that it is undoubtedly an example of *H. griseus* with a typically shaped pronotum and with pubescence and punctures on the abdominal segments. The specimen is on card inscribed "G. R. W. Coll." but there is a pin-hole through the right elytron. It could be rejected as a definitely British specimen on the grounds that it lacks provenance but its identity is beyond question.

Fowler's New Forest record presumably relates to the specimen he mentioned earlier (Fowler, 1882) which was stated to be at the time in his hands. It could not, however, be found in a recent search in the Nottingham Museum which holds the Fowler Collection. The Cannock Chase reference given by Fowler presumably refers to a report by Blatch (1879), who mentions a specimen of *Harpalus ruficornis* var *griseus* taken at "Deakins' Grave, 760 feet above sea level" along with *Nebria gyllenhali* (Schoenherr) and *Miscodera arctica* (Paykull). The specimen, however, could not be found among Blatch material either at Manchester Museum or York Museum. Similarly, the specimen(s) mentioned by Johnson (1894) could not be found in the Irish National Collection in Dublin.

Whether the recent occurrence at Wimbledon constitutes the first certain record for the British Isles is thus uncertain. The Waterhouse specimen pre-dates it by over a 100 years but lacks data. It is, however, perhaps significant that it was contemporaries of Waterhouse (e.g. Rye, Fowler), no doubt familiar with the collecting ethos of the day, who decided that it was not a British specimen. More recently, Lindroth, who examined the British carabid fauna in depth in preparation for his Royal Entomological Society Handbook (Lindroth, 1974), concluded that *H. griseus* was not known at the time from the British Isles though it was a potential addition to the British beetle list (Lindroth, 1971). Search of the literature and enquiries among colleagues and to various museums have failed to bring to light a specimen with unequivocal provenance. The species, however, is close to the very common *H. rufipes* and might easily be passed over for small specimens of the latter. I should certainly be interested to hear from anyone knowing of a definitely British specimen.

Table 1. Comparison of *Harpalus griseus* and *H. rufipes*.

| | <i>H. griseus</i> | <i>H. rufipes</i> |
|--|---|---|
| Length | 9 - 11mm | 11 - 16mm |
| hind angles of pronotum | rounded, obtuse | sharp, right-angled or slightly acute |
| sides of pronotum in basal third | straight, right to the hind angles | usually clearly sinuate in front of hind angles but sometimes only weakly so |
| medial region of last three abdominal segments | pubescent, each hair arising from an obvious shallow puncture | glabrous except for setae at rear edge of each abdominal segment; a few microscopic punctures |
| side of elytra at apex | weakly sinuate | clearly sinuate |

The source of the Wimbledon specimen is also a matter of conjecture. The species is known to fly and to come to light (Freude & Arnold, 1976). It could have bred locally or it could have reached Wimbledon aided or unaided from a distant British locality or from the continent. It occurs in France and throughout continental Europe (Lucht, 1987) and in Scandinavia (Silfverberg, 1979) and it is known to be migratory (Lindroth, 1971). The period immediately before its capture was one of prolonged high temperatures both in south-east England and on the nearby parts of continental Europe and this could have helped unaided travel from a distance. Two other species – *Bledius germanicus* Wagner (3 exx.) and *Enochrus bicolor* (Fabricius) (2 exx.), which appeared in the trap during July, each species on one night only, must have flown at least 25km for they are both strictly halophilic, salt-marsh species and there are no suitable localities nearer to Wimbledon. Most of the other 30 beetle species trapped in July, however, are known to occur locally.

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***Ptilophora plumigera* D. & S. (Lep.: Notodontidae) the Plumed Prominent in West Kent**

On 11 November 1995 Bernard Skinner, Paul Sokoloff, Keith Palmer, Tony Steele and myself ran five light-traps at Shoreham for *Ptilophora plumigera*. A male, the sole specimen seen, was netted on a sheet at about 19.45 hours, some three hours after sunset. The trap concerned was the only one sited in the open and not under *Acer campestre*.

The most recent record that I am aware of for this species in the general vicinity of this site is given in Chalmers-Hunt (*The Butterflies and Moths of Kent*) and dates from 1955. The meagre results compared with the effort suggests that the moth is at low density or flew slightly earlier than usual. There were no large stands of *A. campestre* at the site and this leads me to suppose that the species probably still occurs at suitable places all along the Darenth Valley.

The evening was also notable for the late occurrence of a number of common species. Those recorded included *Carcina quercana* Fabr and the Barred Sallow *Xanthia aurago* D. & S.– IAN D. FERGUSON, 31 Cathcart Drive, Orpington, Kent BR6 8DU.

Migrant butterflies in south-west England

On Monday 9 October 1995, at 09.30 hours, I noticed a small butterfly resting in the shade on the side of my house. It turned out to be a Long-tailed Blue *Lampides boeticus* L. A few minutes later, as the sunlight reached the spot, the butterfly quivered its wings briefly, then flew off strongly in an easterly direction.

On Saturday 14 October 1995, I sat down for a cup of tea at Looe in Cornwall, when a Monarch *Danaus plexippus* L. flew across the lawn at 12.30 hours, flying onto the beach and disappearing in a south-westerly direction.– A.A. ARCHER LOCK, 4 Glenwood Road, Mannamead, Plymouth, Devon PL3 5NH.